

# How To Oper

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**"S**omething isn't right about that picture," I thought, as I watched two Sailors in the distance paint a ship's forward superstructure from a manlift basket. It didn't take me long to figure out the problem. The Sailors weren't dressed correctly; neither had any type of flotation device or a helmet.

After thinking about all the risks and hazards those two Sailors faced, I walked over to their ship and stopped the operation. Once their feet were on the ground, I started asking the two Sailors questions about the procedures for operating manlifts. Neither could answer a single question.

I explained the procedures, then went to the OOD and told him what I had done. His response was, "I didn't even know anyone was working over the side."

As if that incident wasn't enough to open my eyes, the next day, I was walking down another pier when I saw two more Sailors doing preservation work from a manlift basket. Both were wearing the correct gear, but as I soon would learn, there was a third person in the basket—a PO2, who was operating the manlift with no personal protection. He also was the one assigned to watch the whole operation.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out these two incidents cried for operational risk management. If you want to avoid problems while using manlifts, I recommend you follow these steps (which are based on standards of the American National Standards Institute and the Code of Federal Regulations) for using lifts on and over land:



When operating a manlift like this one, avoid problems by using operational risk management.

# ate a Manlift

## **Before an operation starts, the operator must:**

- ☞ Be qualified and licensed according to local instructions.
- ☞ Read and understand the operating instructions and safety rules for the equipment being used.
- ☞ Understand all decals, warnings and instructions displayed on the work platform.
- ☞ Send the OOD and CO a checksheet<sup>1</sup> that requests permission to work over the side or aloft.

## **Before each work shift starts, the operator must:**

- ☞ Inspect for defects that would affect a lift's safe operation. Be alert for cracked welds or other structural defects, leaks in hydraulics, damaged control cables, loose wires, or bad tires.
- ☞ Test the controls to make sure they work.
- ☞ Check the operating condition of the brakes, lights and other automotive-operating accessories, such as horns and warning devices.

## **Before each elevation, the operator must:**

- ☞ Check for overhead obstructions and high-voltage conductors.
- ☞ Elevate the work on only a firm, level surface.
- ☞ Make sure the load and its distribution on the platform is according to the manufacturer's rated capacity. Never exceed the rated work load.
- ☞ Use the outriggers or stabilizers, if required, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ☞ Make sure guard rails on the platform are installed correctly, and the gates or openings are closed.
- ☞ Check all occupants' safety belts or harnesses and lanyards, making sure they are attached correctly. Don't attach lanyards to objects outside the basket.

## **Before and while operating a lift with its platform elevated, the operator must:**

- ☞ Look in the direction of and keep a clear view of the path of travel. Make sure the path is firm and level.
- ☞ Maintain a safe distance from obstacles (ahead and above), debris, holes, depressions, ramps, and other hazards.
- ☞ Set the brakes and chock the wheels once stopped.

## **While operating a lift, the operator must not:**

- ☞ Use ladders or makeshift devices on the platform so workers can reach higher.
- ☞ Climb up or down extendable arms.
- ☞ Sit on or climb on the edge of the basket.
- ☞ Delay reporting any defects or malfunctions to the supervisor.
- ☞ Engage in stunt driving or horseplay.

## **The Naval Safety Center also recommends that lift operators observe these rules when working on, around or over water:**

- ☞ Wear hard hats with chin straps.
- ☞ Wear life jackets. Do not wear safety harnesses or lanyards attached to the lift.
- ☞ When using a lift on a barge, secure the lift to the barge with wire or tie-downs.
- ☞ Do not alter or disable safety devices or interlocks.
- ☞ Make sure a supervisor watches the lift operations from a pier or barge.
- ☞ When people are working on a ship's sides, the supervisor must ensure the deck above the lift is free from hazards, especially falling objects.

If you follow these tips, you can raise your productivity level without raising your mishap rate. ☺

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## **For More Info...**

<sup>1</sup>Copies of the checksheet you need for working over the side or aloft are available in Appendices C8-A and C8-B of OpNavInst 5100.19C (with change 2).